



Maricopa County

News Release

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Charcoal, Fireworks, Sunblock and Mosquito Repellent Make West Nile Protection Part of Your Holiday

When making your grocery store list for your 4th of July items, be sure to include mosquito repellent to keep you and your family safe from West Nile virus (WNV).

"Fight the Bite" campaign has been implemented to educate and keep the public aware of the potential danger of WNV. Inform your family and be prepared when participating in out door activities such as grilling, swimming, or enjoying fireworks. Just follow these few safety tips and enjoy your weekend – worry free!

- Limit outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- If you are outside, cover up by wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants, shoes and socks, if possible.
- Use mosquito repellent (CDC recommends repellent containing DEET) on exposed skin, following label instructions.
- Eliminate standing water on your property which can become possible mosquito breeding sites. These include but are not limited to standing waters in tires, plastic containers, or any water holding container.

In 2004, when Maricopa County led the number of WNV cases across the nation, 355 people were infected in our valley and 14 people died from the disease. Last year, our County efforts lowered the number to 68 reported human cases and four deaths. In 2008, our County already has had its first human case of WNV reported in March, being the first identified case in the nation and the first time a case has been reported so early in the year.

West Nile virus is spread when a mosquito feeds on an infected bird. The mosquito then bites an animal or a person who may develop a fever, muscle aches, headache, or other symptoms relating to WNV. These symptoms may take anywhere from three to fourteen days to appear and only last for a few days. Many people who are infected with WNV will never experience any symptoms. Among those most at risk for developing serious illness include people over fifty, those with immune deficiencies, and those who spend a lot of time outdoors.

In addition to protecting yourself against West Nile virus, it is also important to stay hydrated and to be safe when out in the sun. So this 4th of July weekend and throughout the summer don't forget to drink plenty water and also add sunblock lotion to your shopping list. For more information on dealing with the Valley's extreme heat, please visit: www.heataz.org

To learn more about West Nile virus, mosquito eating fish, to report green pools or file any mosquito related complaint, or to request WNV materials or presentations for your group/organization, call (602) 506-0700 or visit www.maricopa.gov/wnv.

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